

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in the above-identified application and have been rejected in the most recent Office Action. Claims 1 and 7 are cancelled hereinabove. Claims 2-12 and 14-17 are amended hereinabove. New claims 29 and 30 have been added hereinabove. The abstract was previously amended in the preliminary amendment filed on August 1, 2002. Applicants respectfully traverse each ground of rejection and request reconsideration and further examination of the application under 37 CFR § 1.111. Applicants respond to each ground of rejection and objection as follows.

A. The abstract was objected to as containing language which may be implied (i.e. “The present invention includes...”)

Although the abstract as originally filed contained such language (specifically, the introductory clause “The present invention includes”), the abstract was amended in a preliminary amendment filed on August 1, 2002 to read as follows:

A method for producing high-alumina bodies with superior chemical properties at reduced sintering temperatures, including the steps of providing an alumina powder precursor, adding about 4 weight percent magnesia powder precursor, homogenizing the resultant green powder precursor, pressing a green body from the green powder precursor, removing residual moisture and organic material from the green body, and firing the green body to about cone 13, wherein the resulting high-alumina body is substantially non-vitreous, has a substantially uniformly sized grain structure, is very resistant to dissolution in molten aluminum, and has superior resistance to chemical attack over substantially the entire pH range.

The abstract, as amended, has the form of a single paragraph between 50 and 150 words and does not include language that may be implied. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the abstract is no longer objectionable.

B. Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention.

The Section 112 grounds of rejection have been addressed and overcome by the present amendments, as follows: Independent claims 1 and 7 have been cancelled hereinabove, and thus the rejections of claims 1 and 7 are moot.

Claim 4 has been re-written in independent form and, while doing so, the term “wherein about 2 weight percent” was deleted. Further, step g) as imported from claim 1 has been rewritten to improve its form.

Claims 2, 3, 5 and 6 have been amended to depend from claim amended 4.

Claims 12 and 15 have been re-written in independent form, respectively incorporating the subject matter of parent claim 7. The material imported from claim 7 was amended to improve its form and obviate any antecedent basis inconsistencies.

Claims 8-11, 14, 16 and 17 have been amended to depend from amended claim 12.

New claims 29 and 30 have been added to depend from claim 15. Claims 29 and 30 are virtually identical to amended claims 16 and 17, respectively, with the exception that they depend from claim 15 instead of claim 12.

It is submitted that the 35 U.S.C. 112 grounds of rejection have been overcome.

- C. Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eddy et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,052,538) and claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eddy et al. and further in view of Hashimoto et al. (2004/0049045).**

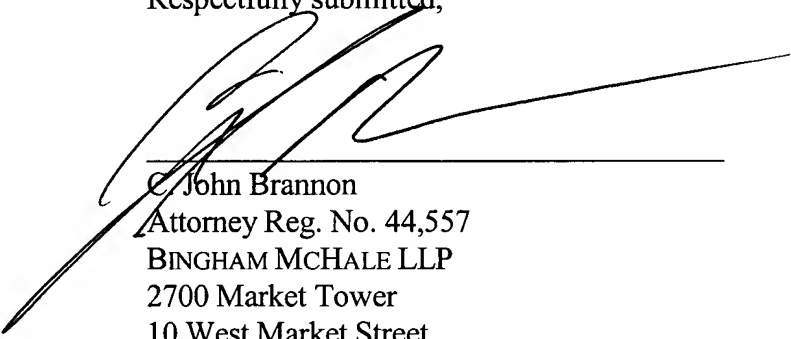
Independent claims 1 and 7 have been cancelled hereinabove. Claim 4 was not rejected under Eddy et al., was indicated as allowable in the most recent office action, and was amended hereinabove to be put into independent form. Claims 2, 3, 5, and 6 have been amended hereinabove to depend from claim 4 and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 4. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 2, 3, 5, and 6 are allowable over Eddy et al. and the references of record for at least the same reasons as set forth in the most recent office action regarding claim 4.

Likewise, claim 12 was not rejected under Eddy et al., was indicated as allowable in the most recent office action, and was amended hereinabove to be put into independent form. Claims 8-11, 14, 16 and 17 have been amended hereinabove to depend from claim 12 and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 12. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 8-11, 14, 16 and 17 are allowable over Eddy et al. and the references of record for at least the same reasons as set forth in the most recent office action regarding claim 12.

CONCLUSION

Applicant has cancelled claims 1 and 7 and amended claim 2, 3, 5,6, 8-11, 14, 16 and 17 hereinabove. Applicants have added new claims 29 and 30 hereinabove. Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance for pending claims 2-6, 8-17 and 29-30. The undersigned welcomes a telephonic interview with the Examiner, if the Examiner believes that such an interview would facilitate review of this Amendment Response.

Respectfully submitted,



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